He[1] makes sacrifices on important occasions, especially for rain and for victory in war, and it is his duty to provide cattle for the sacred herds of Nyikang at Nyilual and Wau and a canoe for Nyikang's shrine at Nyibodho. Nyikang, the culture hero of the Shilluk, their first king, and the creator of their nation, is immanent in him and this makes him the double pivot of Shilluk society, the political head of the nation and the centre of the national cult. The kingship is the common symbol of the Shilluk people and, Nyikang being immortal, an abiding institution which binds past and present and future generations.

The correspondence of political structure with religious cult can be seen at every point of the structure. The territorial segments of the nation and their association with lineages is, as we have noted, validated by the myth of Nyikang's parcelling out of his conquests among the clans, the strands of which are, moreover, caught up into a single mythological point, Nyikang. Some trace their descent from his companions, some from his collateral relatives, others from the original inhabitants of the country conquered by him, and yet others from men who played some part in his saga. The lineage heads who are the chiefs of settlements have ritual duties to the kingship: in

[1] i.e., the King. - Analyst

643 793 [782] [173]
182 613 631 [773]
182 631 622 778

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The Shilluk settlement is open, on the other hand, to certain structural weaknesses which follow from its internal organisation. These are pointed out by Pumphrey.(1) Each *wedh* kinship group has a dual loyalty - to its own lineage and to the settlement as represented by the *jago* and the dominant lineage. Only if the settlement chief and his lineage are strong are the loyalties of the hamlet lineages submerged in the larger unit. The cohesion of the settlement is, however, favoured in the rainy season owing to the fact that travelling is difficult and the community tends to be isolated. At such times the influence of the Shilluk *reth* is diminished and he has to rely on the loyalty of the settlement chief; isolation also increases the feeling of unity and the Shilluk clans, being dispersed and without territorial cohesion, are placed at a disadvantage.

[182]

Each lineage represented within a settlement has its original hamlet, the *pan dwong*, founded by the original immigrant who started the lineage in the settlement, and this is at the head of all hamlets of the lineage which have subsequently been formed in the settlement. The lineage head is the chief of the *pan dwong* and represents his lineage in the administration of the settlement unit. New hamlets are continually being founded by ambitious young men - usually in the same settlement as the parent hamlet and subservient to it, but occasionally they are started in another part of the country. The offshoots from the original hamlet *(pan dwong)* in the same settlement are called *nyde nyer* and are included under the name of the original hamlet, but if some grow important and large they will acquire separate names. Some originally powerful hamlets may eventually disintegrate altogether.

The lineages, and therefore the hamlets within a settlement, are closely related through kinship ties of one sort and another. A common feature in many lineage systems, and one which is also found among the Shilluk, is that the descendants of a man who has settled with his wife's people trace their descent through the female link to the lineage in whose home they live. Howell quotes specific instances in which this occurred in a settlement.(2)

[611]

The *wedh* lineages are thus grafted on to the dominant lineages of a settlement. Intermarriage occurs between members and relationship is traced through female links, the *wedh* lineage becoming 'sister's sons', and thus the structural differentiation within a settlement is greatly mitigated. The settlement is an integrated unit bound together by territorial unity, common economic and legal interests, allegiance to one chief and to a dominant lineage to which all are connected in some way, and finally, bound by the necessity of mutual co-operation during the rainy season and in times of danger from outside sources. To counterbalance this, there are lineage loyalties and lines of structural cleavage within the settlement. These, in certain circumstances, such as weak leadership and dissatisfaction with their representation by the chief to the central authority, may cause the settlement unit to be rent by internal feuds and fissions.

Divisions

[631]

There are 11 divisions as follows:-(3)

(1) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.7. (2) Howell, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.55.
(3) Howell and Thompson, *S.N.R.* 1946, Vol.XXVII, Fig.2.

NORTHERN PROVINCE (GERR)

631 Muomo Dalalajak Athodwoi Datwok Golbany Fashoda

SOUTHERN PROVINCE (LUAK)

Wau Malakal Datim Fanyikang Tung

These have little political importance though they are said to have been made by the order of Nyikang. They have the tradition of co-operation when necessary to meet a common danger or a difficult situation. This tendency of contiguous settlements to combine for warfare was utilised by the Turkish government and is now used by the Anglo-Egyptian government to form administrative units. Originally, the associations were not permanent enough to be regarded as politically important.

The Provinces

Shilluk country is divided into two great provinces, Gerr and Luak (Northern Shillukland and Southern Shillukland), which are ritually important but have little administrative significance. The boundary dividing the two provinces is a water-course called Khor Arepajur, just south of Fashoda. The chief of Debalo Kwom, just south of Arepajur, is, through his office, the chief of Luak. The chief of the settlement of Golban, north of Khor Arepajur, is chief of Gerr.

Apart from these, only two other chiefs and divisions counted. These were the chiefs of the settlements forming the northernmost and southernmost regions of Shillukland, the chiefs of Muomo and Tonga.(1) Fashoda, the capital of Shillukland, occupied by the *reth*, is the focal point of the structure of the Shilluk people and this is clearly seen, not only in administrative matters but in ritual and myth and in the circumstances surrounding the installation of the *reth*.

644 182

SOCIAL DIVISIONS

614 The Shilluk people are divided into four main classes or groups of clans:

The Kwareth

565 614 644 This is the royal clan, the largest of all clans and, like the others, is spread through all parts of the country. All members trace their descent, in the male line, from Nyikang and only a member of the royal clan and one whose father has been a *reth* is eligible for election to the kingship. Within the *kwareth* are four main titles.

(a) *Reth* - The reigning king.
(b) *Nyireth* - The son or daughter of a *reth* - whether reigning or dead.

(1) See Evans-Pritchard, *The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk*, 1948, p.9.

It would appear, therefore, that in judicial and administrative matters the Shilluk *reth* is far from being an over-riding or autocratic political authority. Local chiefs seem to be free to follow their own traditional courses without much interference. In actual powers of government and administration, and in personal prerogative, the *reth* may be little more than a mediator in disputes and perhaps the balancing force which decides a quarrel one way or another. It is in ritual matters that his real position and powers are indicated.

THE RITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RETH

Evans-Pritchard writes: "both his functions and his status are primarily of a ritual order. He makes sacrifices on important occasions, especially for rain and for victory in war, and it is his duty to provide cattle for the sacred herds of Nyikang at Nyilual and Wau and a canoe for Nyikang's shrine at Nyibodho.(1)

It is noticeable that everywhere there is the closest connection between the political structure and the religious cult.

(a) The territorial segments and their association with certain dominant lineages are explained in terms of the myth of Nyikang's division of the country among his followers who became the founding ancestors of many of the Shilluk clans.

(b) The lineage heads who are chiefs of settlements have ritual duties to the kingship. They perform ceremonial services at the time of the *reth*'s investiture, are responsible for building huts in Fashoda and for the upkeep of Nyikang's shrines and those of past *reths*. The tombs of the dead kings are indistinguishable from the shrines of Nyikang and have the same ceremonial importance in rain-making ceremonies, harvest rituals and so forth.

(c) The traditional customs of the people and the organisation of society in every way are considered to be the work of Nyikang directly or acting in the line of *reths*.

(d) The identification of Nyikang with the king is the central point of the Shilluk political, ritual and moral system. The people believe that Nyikang reigns and manifests himself in the *reth*. Nyikang is also the medium between the Shilluk and Juok - their chief spirit. The Shilluk consider the *reth* to be in close communication with the mystic forces of life, and Nyikang is the connecting link, participating in Juok as he does in the *reth*.(2)

The *reth* is considered to come under the category of Divine Kings, as described by Frazer in *The Golden Bough*. This is clear from the mode of his death and succession as well as from the duties he performs during his lifetime.

Succession of the Reth

Only the son of a *reth* who has reigned is eligible, and a *nyireth* may

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk*, 1948, pp. 16-17.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 19.

symbol of unity and cohesion. The main events are as follows:- 643

The funeral of the dead *reth* is carried out and is followed, a year later, by mortuary ceremonies and funeral dances. These events are chiefly a family affair and are organised by the *ororo* and the *kwareth*.

The election of the *reth* concerns the whole of the Shilluk people who are represented by the chiefs of the North and South Provinces. The *reth* is chosen from among the *nyireth* by an electoral college, composed of the descendants of the men who were, traditionally, made chiefs of the first degree by Nyikang when he parcelled out the country between eleven of his followers.(1) Three representatives from the *kwareth* are also included, but the *ororo* and *bang reth* have no representatives and take no part in the election although they are important in the ceremonies of installation. 643 666

Just as Shillukland is divided into two territorial divisions, Gerr and Luak, so for ritual purposes this atructure is represented in special ritual terms. The Northern province becomes *Gol Dhiang*, the Southern province becomes *Gol Nyikang*. There is a rough correspondence between the two political and the two ritual divisions. The chiefs of the ritual divisions are the political chiefs of Golbany and Kwom, the two settlements just north and south of Fashoda. 182 631

The election of a particular *reth* must have the backing of the whole country, although at first sight it may appear that the choice lies with the chiefs of Gol Dhiang and Gol Nyikang. The election cannot take place unless they agree and this does not involve their own personal opinions solely. The other chiefs all take part and represent the views of each section of the country and if there is disagreement between the two provinces civil war may follow. Agreement is usually reached before the electoral college sits and formally proposes and elects the new *reth*. During the interval between the death of a *reth* and the election of his successor custom requires that all potential claimants should stay in their villages. This is the chance to seize the *reth*ship by force, if a candidate wishes to do so and has the necessary backing. Co-operation between the candidate and his settlement chief is essential for only the latter has the necessary force and only a *reth*'s son is eligible for the *reth*ship. Other chiefs join the rebels and fighting will begin. Until one side is defeated, or the *nyireth* is killed there will be civil war. 631 643 666 643 669

The Installation Ceremonies

Skins, ostrich feathers and the various trappings for the pageantry of the ceremonies are provided traditionally by certain clans and settlements. The principal shrine of Nyikang is at Akurwa, where he is believed to have disappeared in a storm. At his shrine are kept effigies of Nyikang and his son Dak. Into these effigies the spirits of Nyikang and Dak may enter at any time. On the death of a *reth* new images are made, for it is believed that Nyikang's spirit, formerly in the *reth*, transfers itself to the new effigy and remains there during the inter-regnum. At the installation 643 778

(1) Howell and Thomson, *S.N.R.*, 1946, Vol.XXVII, p.29.

643 778 of the newly elected *reth* Nyikang and Dak are brought in procession from Akurwa to Fashoda with their priests to test the new *reth*.

● 182 631 643 541 The conventional opposition between northern and southern divisions now becomes apparent. The forces of the southern province flock to support the *reth*-elect and wait at Debalo settlement while Nyikang and his supporters assemble at Adodo. The two armies then march to Khor Arepajur and a mock battle takes place with millet stalks instead of spears. Nyikang captures the *reth*-elect and there is a procession to the shrine of Nyikang at Fashoda. Certain ceremonies of a mystic nature follow, which are not participated in by the whole people, as are the procession and battle. The image of Nyikang is placed on the royal stool, then the king-elect sits on it and the spirit of Nyikang is believed to enter into him, and possess him causing him to tremble.

A few days later a second mock battle occurs between the king's supporters and Nyikang. The *reth* is victorious, for Nyikang has taken possession of him and the effigy is now merely the symbol of Nyikang and no longer the repository of his spirit. . In a final ceremony all the important chiefs and elders from all parts of Shillukland declare their allegiance to the new *reth*.

182 643 The installation ceremonies of the *reth* and the traditions relating to Nyikang show how, at every point, the structure and political organisation of the Shilluk people is confirmed by ritual and by mystic symbols.

643 669 All rebellions and revolts are directed against the king in person and not against the kingship itself. The unity of the Shilluk is such that the various segments of the country can be represented by the common symbol of the *reth*-ship. Nevertheless, there are powerful tendencies towards fission within the structure. As has been shown, the kingship is the subject of competition on the part of the *nyireth* candidates supported by chiefs and forces available from their territories.

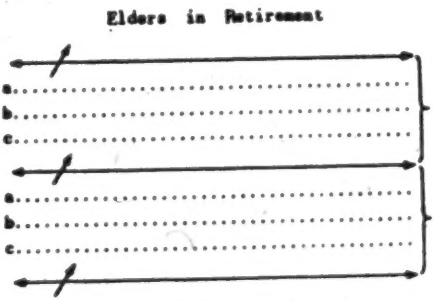
171 Of all the Nilotic groups for which there is any considerable information, the Shilluk alone form a single political unit, or nation, as opposed to a number of separate tribes or tribal groups which are culturally similar but not politically unified. At the same time, the principles of their political structure and social organisation are similar in many respects to those of the rest of the Nilotes, in particular the Anuak.

AGE SETS

114 Apart from a brief mention by Hofmayr, the only information concerning the Shilluk age sets is contained in Howell's article in *Sudan Notes and Records*, 1941, Vol.XXIV.

54 881 On reaching puberty a Shilluk boy is initiated into the age-set organisation. A Shilluk age set is known as *ric* and is made up of three or more subdivisions each consisting of men of approximately the same age, who have herded cattle together as boys. A man always remains in the subdivision into which he has been initiated, but a periodical shuffling of the subdivisions alters their respective positions in an age set and the whole age-set organisation. A reorganisation of the groups of subdivisions

thus occurs periodically. The subdivisions of any age set are known as 561
'head', 'neck' and 'middle'.



..... Subdivisions in formation.

As new subdivisions are continually being formed by initiated youths the immediate age set into which they enter grows too large. In addition the oldest subdivisions of the age set, comprising the married men and fathers, begin to die out or are ready for retirement. A new grouping of all the subdivisions is achieved by the *ngol* or cutting ceremony, when age sets are ceremonially divided into distinct units. The process is shown in the diagram. Surviving members of age set A (the older subdivisions) pass completely out of the age organisation into retirement. Older subdivisions of age set B pass into age set A to replace those retiring, while the most recently formed subdivisions pass for the first time into age set B. Thus, room is made for the formation of new subdivisions and there is a moving of subdivisions through the age sets or the formation of newly constituted age sets.

The retired age sets take no part in fighting or in ceremonies connected with the age-set organisation. The reshuffling occurs at the induction of the very young subdivisions, the members of which are anxious to have further privileges and a higher status. On ceremonial occasions the age sets have special parts of the animals killed, the highest age set eats the back and chest, the lower will eat the hump and legs only. According to Howell the regrouping of subdivisions is often the subject of much dispute, particularly between the two subdivisions which will be separated by the new line of division.

There are few occasions when the age set functions. At funerals the men are organised according to age sets as also at beer feasts when each sits in a special place and sings its own song. [764 504]

Age sets emphasize the solidarity of the settlement by organizing the generations within it. Each settlement unit has its own age-set organisation and there is no connection between the age sets of different settlements, though they all have similar forms and play similar parts in the settlement units. The age sets have little political importance, save that they constitute a bond of unity within the settlement, and this is clear 182 561 621

from the fact that the *jago*, elders of the dyil clan, and other lineage representatives, hold political authority quite apart from the age organisation. The age sets take no part in disputes within the settlement, but when the settlement as a whole goes to war the warriors "... are mobilised into age sets."(1) Howell suggests that formerly the age organisation had special military functions, but whether this was so or not, the age sets seem to fulfil a more peaceful purpose today, and form a useful basis for organising the relations of generations for social purposes.

The Ngol Ceremony

At the *ngol* ceremony a war leader (*ban*) is elected. The *ban* has no administrative or political functions. His duties consist in organising the mobilisation of the warriors and presiding at communal feasts at which people assemble in age sets. His age mates may assist him in his cultivations. After the *ngol* ceremony each age set is given a new name.

Initiation

There are no elaborate rites of initiation among the Shilluk. Participation in a dance, the *cong bul* marks the initiation of a youth in the age organisation. The *cong bul* is a social affair which is arranged periodically with the permission of the *jago* of the settlement. It is not a ceremony of initiation in the normal sense but merely a formal recognition by the community that a lad has reached adult status and can take part in a man's obligations and privileges. Previous to the *cong bul* a youth is restricted in that he may not fight with spears, take part in war or in any dance other than one held for children. Before the *cong bul* he is not allowed to wear certain kinds of ornaments.

The *cong bul* is attended by a boy when he is 14-16 years old, or earlier if he has to take over the duties of family head through the death of his father. A youth normally obtains his father's permission and another man is appointed to act as his sponsor. The sponsor ceremonially adorns the youth with ornaments before he enters the dance. At the beginning of the dance the warriors salute the *jago*, advance in formation and fling themselves before him.

At the time of the *cong bul* the initiated is usually presented with two spears by his father. Rich men give their sons an ox and they take their ox-names from these animals. An ox so given is kept until it dies and then a new one of the same colour is substituted. After the *cong bul* the initiates visit relatives and travel round the countryside for a few months.

CLANS AND LINEAGES

There are about a hundred patrilineal clans in Shillukland. Each clan has a name which is preceded by the word *kwar*, meaning 'descendants of'. All clansmen trace their descent from a common ancestor. They are bound by distinct rules of behaviour, by special observances and are exogamous.(2)

The Shilluk clans, like all Nilotic clans, are dispersed, each clan

(1) Howell, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.57. (2) *Ibid.*, p.47.

but the usual fine for making another man's wife pregnant consists of three cows and one bull; if pregnancy does not result the fine is two head of cattle. Fines for seduction are paid to the girl's father and vary from one to three head of cattle according to whether or not the girl is made pregnant. If a woman has committed adultery, she confesses it at the time of childbirth; her husband then exacts the appropriate fines from the men concerned.

If children have been born outside marriage the eventual husband may take them over and will pay extra bridewealth cattle. Failing this, they are brought up in the *gol* of their maternal uncle and belong to his clan. He will receive the bridewealth paid on the marriage of the girls.(1)

Widow Inheritance

According to Westermann widows are inherited by the brothers of the dead husband or by his sons, who take the wives who are not their own mothers. He then adds that, if children are begotten from these wives, they belong to the family of the dead man and "they are like his own children."(2) This custom of raising up seed to the name of the dead man is general among the Nilotic tribal groups.

KINSHIP AND KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

Ora

The in-law relationship of *ora* has been commented on by Seligman and Pumphrey. It appears to have two particular applications, being used in a narrow and in a wider sense.

A man describes as *ora* all his wife's kinsmen and, strictly, all the kinsmen of the wives of the men of his own generation belonging to his own clan. This extension may be because he is allowed, at any rate in theory, to have access to the wives of such clansmen and temporarily takes over the in-law relationship with their parents. During the first years of marriage the members of the husband's *gol* have to respect and to avoid the members of the wife's *gol*. Pumphrey suggests that the basic reason for this is that the initial period of marriage is an unstable one and friction is gradually resolved as the bridewealth is paid off and children are born. To avoid friction the husband does not speak to his *ora* and meets them as little as possible.

In a wider sense the *ora* tie is connected with certain sex taboos. The breach of these taboos is believed to cause *deulo* sickness, a form of illness believed to affect both mother and child who will die unless the man who induced the mother to break the taboo will split a gourd in two and sacrifice a sheep.(3) There are certain *ora* relationships between lineages and one lineage will be *ora* to another. Thus, if men of lineage A have married women of lineage B, C and D, there are *ora* relationships between A and B; A and C; A and D. In such a case no men of lineages B, C and D

(1) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, pp.34-5.
(2) Westermann, *The Shilluk People*, 1912, p.114.
(3) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.29.

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

example, it is said that[1] originally God (*juok*) had the people in his land, until they ate fruit which made them sick, and God therefore sent them away. Another story tells that there was once a road to the moon which men could use, but they became too heavy to do so, in circumstances which are not here relevant.[2] Yet another story[3] tells how the sun and moon used to live together, until they quarrelled and therefore are no longer together. In some Shilluk myths (to be considered later) it is said that some men were not differentiated from animals and other creatures. There is thus the implication, though it may be conveyed in stories which are perhaps not told very seriously, that some things which were once together are now apart. The broadest division of the space around them recognized by the Shilluk is between what is above (the sky) and what is below (the earth). There is a Shilluk riddle which runs: 'What are the two half-round things (in Shilluk, *opunne*, literally 'loaves') of God (*juok*)?' and the answer is 'heaven and earth'. Hofmayr gives the explanation that 'the form in which this is figured is that of a loaf of bread'.[4] Besides sky and earth, there is the river, a third main region of the Shilluk spatial ambient. This tripartite division of the universe into earth, sky, and river, corresponds, of course, to the real categories which anyone in Shilluk country is bound in some way to acknowledge, and in which he is bound on some occasions to think. The savannah country is without mountains, ravines, forests, or other distinctive natural features which might diversify its general contours, and strike the imagination forcibly enough to modify the clarity of the simple, primary distinctions which a man observes in the natural world around him. In such a land, where there is nothing of any size to break the horizon, the sky does indeed become apparent as separate region, almost a place, in relation to the earth. Besides these, there is the river, reflecting both earth and sky. The crops and grass, on which the Shilluk and their herds depend, require that the sky should send rain and the river should rise, and they also need the fish which the river contains. The three regions of earth, sky, and river have values and associations which make the division significant in Shilluk religion and cosmology, as well as in their economy. Their Nilotic neighbours live in a country which, generally, is not unlike their own. The real foreigners come from country of different and inferior quality. Among the Dinka and Nuer also it is thought that the real foreigners come from a country different in nature from their own.

Legends of Nyikang

Legends of the birth and wanderings of Nyikang do not suggest that they occurred in a country very different from that in which the Shilluk now live, but it was a long way away from the present Shilluk kingdom. We are told that the land of Duwat, or the land of Kero, from which the Shilluk

[1] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 238. The details may be Christian.
[2] Ibid., p. 366. [3] Ibid., p. 364. [4] 1925, p. 399.

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

emblems.[1] The story shows that, from the earliest times, the Shilluk suppose the kingship to have been a source of rivalry between the sons of the previous king. Nyikang is not thought to have been the elder of the brothers, and there is no account of any superior claim on his part, except that he also had a following. There is no emphasis in the myth on any customary order of succession, and so today any son of a king who has once been installed is theoretically eligible to become king if he can press his claim. In the past, at least, a man could retain the kingship only if he was able to defend himself against rival claimants. Rivalry over who shall be king is intrinsic to the Shilluk type of kingship, and may perhaps be seen as the most extreme form of the separation of the person from the office consistent with hereditary right to succession.

In the course of their wanderings, Nyikang and his followers came to a country occupied by Dimo,[2] where they lived for a while, and Nyikang married Dimo's daughter. She bore children, of whom the most important was his son Dak. Dak then quarrelled with Dimo, whose people wanted to kill him. Nyikang made an effigy of Dak, which was speared in Dak's place by the followers of Dimo. Effigies of Nyikang, Dak, and another son of Nyikang called Cal, are now used, as will be described, in the ceremonies for the installation of the Shilluk king. This is the first mention of an effigy, which was thus an idea of Nyikang. In one story Dak is a mischievous and quarrelsome figure, who grew to a tremendous size. He is also very intelligent, and there are accounts of how he and Nyikang, in contest with Dimo, were able to blind Dimo's people and his cattle, thus forcing Dimo to give up the fire, which he had hidden, and to release the rain, which he had stopped. The significance of this power of Nyikang and Dak to cause blindness will later be suggested. Here we remark that the effigy of Dak, used in the ceremonies for the installation of the king, is now a long figure made from bamboos and surmounted with black ostrich feathers, and that Dak is still a symbol of the warlike qualities of the Shilluk king. He is the fighter while Nyikang is the leader. The third son, Cal, who is also represented in effigy in the ceremonies for the installation of the king, is made not of ambatch, like Nyikang, nor of bamboo, like Dak, but of rope, and the feathers which form his head are the grey feathers of the female ostrich.[3] He plays a less important part than Dak or Nyikang in the ceremonies. We are told that Cal was a coward, and therefore Nyikang thought it safe for him to remain with him and Dak, while he sent away another of his sons, Buro, because he was as headstrong as Dak.[4] It is said that Cal succeeded his father as king, but did not reign for long and disappeared, to be succeeded by his brother

[1] Hofmayr, p. 14. The emblems then were a skin for slinging across the shoulder of the king, and a hoe of some kind. Other emblems were later acquired. The story shows how Shilluk ideas of kingship are bound up with the possession of distinguishing emblems by the king.

[2] Who is sometimes said to be a brother of Nyikang. The relationship varies with the context of the telling of the story.

[3] Howell and Thomson, 1946, p. 68.

[4] Oyler, 1918 (i).

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Dak. In this story, and in the weaker, female associations of the effigy of Cal, I think we may see represented by contrast the value which the Shilluk attach to courage and warlike qualities in their king, for the aggressive, headstrong Dak supersedes in importance the weaker eldest son, Cal. In songs Dak is the symbol of fighting.[1]

As a result of Dak's and Nyikang's quarrel with Dimo, Nyikang's wife's father, Nyikang and his followers set off once more on their wanderings, while Dimo and his people went in the other direction towards the Bahr-el-Ghazal. It may be noted that Dak, in quarrelling with his mother's people and cleaving to his father, showed in an exaggerated form the nature of the loyalties of the royal sons today, as they should ideally be. Their claim to importance for the whole kingdom is through their father the king and his agnates, and not through their mother's people. A conflict of loyalties between the father's and the mother's people, implicit in other Nilotic societies, is here resolved in a myth of the Shilluk kingship by the aggression of Dak against his maternal uncle Dimo. The main incidents in the further migration of Nyikang, Dak, and their followers, are a fight with Garo, the son of the Sun, Cang, and the crossing of a river, said to have been the Bahr-el-Ghazal, beyond which Nyikang settled his people in their present kingdom. Between them and their present home, there was a river covered with the floating vegetation, the *sudd*, which even now accumulates on these reaches of the Nile and its tributaries. One of Nyikang's followers, an albino, asked Nyikang to clear a way for the people to cross by spearing him in the river. Nyikang did so, and this letting of blood cleared a way for the Shilluk to reach their present home.[2] Hence one of Nyikang's many praise-names, or titles of honour, means 'crosser of the river' (the Bahr-el-Ghazal). The fight with the Sun and his son, an incident which seems to suggest to Hofmayr[3] some early contact between the Shilluk and the Galla, occurred when the Shilluk were temporarily settled on the river bank, before crossing. Nyikang then lost a cow. It was reported to be in the herd of the Sun, and Dak set out with his followers to reclaim it. He fought with Garo, the son of the Sun, and cut off Garo's hand or finger in order to get a silver ring or bracelet. In the course of the fight, Nyikang drove the Sun back into the sky, and revived his army by sprinkling them with water, or by touching them with the silver bracelet. Another version is that Nyikang made the Sun shine at night so that the fight might go on.[4] Others of Nyikang's titles of honour refer to this victory over the Sun. The silver from the ring or bracelet is said to have been used for silver emblems—a bracelet and spear

[1] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 63.

[2] Westermann, 1912, *et al.*

[3] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 61, where the Shilluk names for the Sun and his son, Cang and Garo, are said to be similar to those for a division of the Galla, *Yangaro*, *Tsangaro*, or *Djindjiro*, and other details of the story are said to connect with the Galla. If this is so, there must have been some contact between the Western Dinka of the Bahr-el-Ghazal and the Galla, since they have the same story.

[4] I do not give all the details of this story, of which there are many versions. The résumé here given follows Hofmayr, 1925, pp. 60–62, and Westermann, 1912, pp. 159–61.

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ornaments—which are among the royal emblems of the Shilluk at the present day, and are given to a new king at his installation.[1] The crossing of the river and the fight with the Sun seem to be occurrences of great imaginative importance for the Shilluk, as they are for the Western Dinka, in whose mythology they appear in a different form, and by whom they are associated, though in different ways, a mythical leader who in many ways resembles Nyikang. It may be mentioned that the sun, in Shilluk country, seems to be at its hottest at the end of the dry season, just before the rains, and its heat is in a sense overcome when the rains fall. Nyikang is believed to bring the rain, and in that sense still revives his people by sprinkling them with water. At this time, too, those who have been herding cattle for the dry season on islands in the river or in pastures on the east bank of the Nile, must return to their homes on the west bank to cultivate, crossing the river in order to do so. The subduing of the Sun, and the crossing of the river by Nyikang and his followers, thus recur in different form in the lives of the Shilluk. They still have to take their cattle to pasture across the river during the dry season, and return home with them when the rains start. Westermann says that:

> The Shilluks along the White Nile cross over to the east bank; likewise the cattle of the Sobat Shilluks descend to the lagoons south of the Sobat. So in both cases they have to cross the rivers, which is, on account of the many crocodiles living in them, not undangerous, and is therefore done with much care and accompanied by weighty ceremonies in order to keep the crocodiles away; this forms an important part of the duties of the witch-doctor.[2]

In the account he gives of such a river crossing, it is said that the cattle are led behind ambatch canoes which the Shilluk use.[3] It will be remembered that the effigy of the 'crosser of the river', Nyikang, used in the installation ceremonies for the king is also made of ambatch.[4] Nyikang is important for that crossing on which the Shilluk herds depend for their grazing. In another Shilluk text Nyikang asks his mother, Nyakaya, to dry up the river in order to help his people against foreign enemies.[5]

In the stories here summarized, Nyikang, the leader and first king of the Shilluk, is able to affect celestial phenomena—he may also raise winds and bring rain—and he divides the river to lead his people across. By agnatic descent he is linked either with a man from heaven or with a special creation of God, and through his mother, Nyakaya, he is linked with the river. He is also the leader by whom the Shilluk were first differentiated as a separate people, and who gave them their present land. His praise-names and titles of honour acknowledge and record his association with sky, river, and earth. Apart from those already mentioned, he has the names 'heaven'

[1] Crazzolara, 1950, p. 39.
[2] Westermann, 1912, Introduction, xxix–xxx.
[3] Ibid., p. 172.
[4] Thomson, 1948, p. 139. This is a correction of Howell and Thomson, 1946, where it is said that the effigy of Nyikang was made of bamboo, like that of his son Dak.
[5] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 55.

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or 'the above', and 'cloud'; he is called 'son of the Nile' and 'son of the river';[1] and in hymns[2] he is called 'our earth' or 'master of the earth'. Thus, all three regions of the Shilluk universe are nominally assimilated to Nyikang, and he to them. It is the single person of Nyikang which gives all three regions their coherence in a single world. There is no other figure in Shilluk mythology, except his successors and representatives the Shilluk kings, who thus associates earth, sky, and river, belonging in part to all.

Significance of Nyikang in the Shilluk World View

Although Nyikang was a man, and is conceived as such by the Shilluk, he is believed not to have died, and thus he is not identified with ordinary men.[3] He is said to have disappeared. Oyler[4] gives some of the expressions which the Shilluk use of Nyikang's end; 'he was lost', 'he returned to his country', 'he went up', 'he became wind', 'he went and lives': all expressions implying that he did not die. He adds that the Shilluk say 'that if Nikawng should die, the whole Shilluk race would perish'. Even now the king of the Shilluk is not spoken of as having died, though the later Shilluk kings, unlike Nyikang and his immediate successors, are thought to have become mortal. Since, as I have suggested, Nyikang is a notion by which the Shilluk apprehend a unity and coherence in the specifically Shilluk world, it is understandable that now, when a king dies, the Shilluk say, 'there is no land—the Shilluk country has ceased to be'.[5] It is not simply that Nyikang and his successors are thought to maintain the order of the Shilluk social and natural universe as though from a position above and outside it. In Nyikang, and in the kings, the parts which make up that order are correlated, and the correlation is apprehended in a single term, Nyikang. He and his successors are thought of as real historical persons, living at their own particular times and with their own unique characteristics and legends. They also represent the idea of a timeless state, unaffected by the chronological succession of events. Every king, representing Nyikang, represents the principle which unifies the Shilluk as a nation, and brings into focus the widest range of specifically Shilluk ideas about the order of nature and of society.

It was Nyikang who first separated the Shilluk people from others of the same stock, who ordered them not to mix with their early enemies,[6] who differentiated them among themselves by associating different lineages with different territories and, where totemic, with different totems, and who made the territorial divisions of Shilluk-land. Thus, he is both a unifying and a differentiating principle in Shilluk thought. The processes of individuation and separation, attributed to Nyikang, involve the creation of the ordered relationship of the individual and separate parts to each other, as the Shilluk understand it. Myths of Nyikang are ways of apprehending that relationship. It is said, for example, that the Nuba have some right,

[1] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 43.
[2] Ibid., p. 45.
[3] Howell and Thomson, 1946, p. 18.
[4] Ibid., *passim*.
[5] Oyler, 1918 (i), p. 115.
[6] Hofmayr, op. cit., p. 7.

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which is now not exercised, to take part in the election of the Shilluk king. This right comes from Nyikang, who originally married his daughter to a Nuba, and received from the Nuba an inlaid stool, a replica of which is now the 'throne' of the Shilluk.[1] Such a myth, for the Shilluk, gives the Nuba a customary place in the social order of the Shilluk world. There are other examples which show that Nyikang explains differentiation, as he explains the relationship between the differentiated parts. One illustration may be taken from a myth of Nyikang's making people from animals,[2] and another, from the nature of the territorial divisions of the Shilluk kingdom.

It is said that when Nyikang first arrived in his land with his followers, he made people for his kingdom out of insects, fish, and animals. These he captured and turned into human beings, and they are the origin of the Shilluk common people. After Nyikang had made these people from the animal creation, 'the parent stock was removed by death', so that their children might not know of their origin. So the Shilluk common people derive their humanity, and their separateness from the animal creation, from the action of Nyikang. They claim, however, that their totems were given them by Nyikang,[3] who thus both separated them from the non-human creation, and also established an ordered relationship between some of the descent groups of his kingdom and various non-human species. According to another account, Nyikang alone was able to recognize that men were masquerading as animals and, seeing through this confusion, he captured them and made them into the men they really were.[4] This story shows Nyikang able to distinguish between appearance and reality, and to assimilate the reality to his kingdom.

Partition of the Shilluk kingdom by Nyikang

The clearest example of Nyikang's position in Shilluk cosmology—that is, their apprehension of the differentiation and the correlation of the parts of their world—is to be found in the territorial partition of the Shilluk kingdom, and this is here described at some length. Nyikang is thought to have entered present Shilluk country in the south-west, near Tonga, and to have moved along the west bank of the river until he established the northern limits of his country near Muomo, founding villages on the way, and associating them with his followers, his clients, or himself. The dominant lineages of various Shilluk settlements thus owe their association with the land in which they live to Nyikang. Westermann says that the Shilluk themselves think of their land as a whole by referring to Tonga and Muomo, its most northerly and southerly settlements, which term 'corresponds exactly to the expression of the ancient Hebrews: from Dan unto Bersheba'.[5] Shilluk country is now divided into two provinces, Ger, or Gerr, in the north and

[1] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 31.
[2] Westermann, 1912, p. 156; Oyler, 1918, pp. 111, 112.
[3] Hofmayr, op. cit., p. 235.
[4] Oyler, 1918 (i), p. 111.
[5] Westermann, op. cit., Introduction, xx.

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Luak in the south, which, in some situations, are politically opposed to each other. These territorial and political divisions are associated, but not coterminous, with two religious divisions which Howell and Thomson call 'sees'.[1] One of these is called Gol Dhiang, and corresponds to the province of Ger and northern Shilluk-land. The other is called Gol Nyikang, and corresponds to Luak and southern Shilluk-land, which Nyikang first settled. These two religious divisions are separated by a stream or inlet of the river, the ceremonial crossing of which by the king-elect forms part of the ceremonies at his installation. The theme of crossing the river, already referred to, is thus repeated in the installation ceremonies for the Shilluk kings, and we find elsewhere how important in Shilluk thought is the crossing from one bank to another. There is, for example, a riddle, the ideas contained in which must seem curious to those for whom the separation of the banks of a river does not have such imaginative value. The riddle asks 'What is a big man, who knows only one bank?' and the answer is 'an island'. Hofmayr explains that an island, unlike the river or the stream, has only one bank.[2] There can thus be no crossing from bank to bank.

Ger and Luak each comprise a number of districts, which are the loose confederacies already mentioned, and seem to have been much modified by Turkish and British rule. It is clear, however, that in the past the really important divisions of Shilluk-land were the religious moieties, Gol Dhiang and Gol Nyikang, and that the boundary between them was the inlet of the river, called Arepejur, which is said to mean 'the gathering of the peoples'. Each of these moieties was divided into settlements. Of these settlements, some of which have given their names to the administrative districts to which they now belong, four were of special traditional importance. These were Muomo and Tonga, guarding the northern and southern marches, and the two settlements divided by the stream Arepejur and facing each other across the boundary between the moieties. The leaders of these latter settlements represented their whole moieties in the election of the Shilluk king, so that in this situation the leader of one settlement was also the leader of Gol Nyikang, and the leader of the other was also the leader of Gol Dhiang.[3] Just north of the boundary between Gol Nyikang and Gol Dhiang, and therefore technically in the northern moiety Gol Dhiang, is the present royal capital, Fashoda. The king's clan seems to be well represented on both sides of the boundary between these moieties.

In describing the Shilluk divisions of their country, it is easy to introduce the notion of an administrative system, with an element of superordination and subordination in the relations between the larger territorial units and

[1] Howell, and Thomson, 1946, p. 75.

[2] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 402.

[3] The history of the boundary between northern and southern Shilluk-land has been very confused. The details of this confusion do not affect Shilluk cosmology. Some of the information here given is from Pumphrey, 1941, but the main analysis of the significance of the religious moieties is taken from the way they functioned at the installation of the King Anei Kur, recorded by Howell and Thomson, 1946, and from the analysis given in Evans-Pritchard, 1948.

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643 elect and the effigy of Nyikang then ceases, and the effigies are returned to their shrines and the king is installed. Thus, in order that the king-elect of the Shilluk shall be understood to have become one with Nyikang, separation and opposition between him and the effigy of Nyikang are created and resolved after fighting in mock battle. This resolution of the separateness
182 of the king-elect and Nyikang is also a unification of the moieties of the
643 Shilluk kingdom for, in the mock fighting, Gol Nyikang supports the
631 king-elect, while Gol Dhiang supports the effigy of Nyikang. Here again
616 Nyikang and the Shilluk king may be seen to represent the principle by which the whole Shilluk kingdom is differentiated into parts, and by which these parts are again comprehended in a whole. In the installation of the new king the unity and integrity of the Shilluk kingdom under Nyikang and the king are stressed at the same time as the *necessary* nature of its parts. The uniting of the parts is not then a function of their subordination to a larger national whole, to which their rights to separate existence are surrendered.[1] It is a function of the acceptance by all of Nyikang and the king, through whom are understood the notions of unity in diversity, which have here been briefly discussed.

The Concept of Juok (God)

182 There is a Shilluk proverb which says that 'the Shilluk customs come
776 from Nyikang',[2] and I have preferred to suggest something of the general significance of Nyikang, rather than to exemplify in detail all the customs which the Shilluk say are derived from him. For, in saying that their customs derive from Nyikang, the Shilluk are speaking both of an original and supposedly historical king, and of complex notions of order and permanence which form what we should have to call a metaphysical system. When the Shilluk make an ideal correlation, whether of parts of the body social, or parts of Shilluk-land, or parts of the natural physical ambient, they introduce the concept of Nyikang. By reference to him they make the most inclusive summary of the detailed order of their world and grasp that order in a single term.

776 Nyikang is necessary for the Shilluk understanding of their social and spatial categories, but he does not explain his own existence, nor the grounds for the reality which, for the Shilluk, he ordered in the categories by which they comprehend it. The nature of that reality is understood through the notion of *juok*, God, to which I now turn. It has already been said that the Shilluk explain the superiority and dominance of foreigners by a pre-
[773] ference shown them by *juok*. In Shilluk story it is *juok*, not Nyikang, who created the world, and *juok* is the being who maintains it and informs it in its entirety. We have so far considered, in the Shilluk understanding of Nyikang, a notion by which a wide range of phenomena are comprehended in their interrelations and explained; to that extent we have

[1] In contradistinction to some European theories of the nation-state.

[2] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 376.

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cosmological system. *Juok* and Nyikang are the most general explanatory concepts the Shilluk have, *juok* or God accounting for the existence and nature of reality, and Nyikang for the way in which the Shilluk order and interpret it. Though Nyikang may be called *juok piny* (God below) he does not represent the totality of what the concept of God means to the Shilluk. God is also apprehended in other ways, and is addressed as God the Protector, God the Giver, God the Creator, and by other titles which correspond to the various situations in which the Shilluk need to invoke him, or explain effects which they attribute to him. *Juok* is thus a common explanation for illness, for the Shilluk seem to use this word to account for what is unknown in its nature but experienced in its effects.

The Shilluk God is the final explanation both for what is good and what is evil, from a human point of view, but he is not himself good or evil. Howell describes him as 'a remote and amoral deity . . . present to a greater or lesser degree in all things',[1] and there are many indications in the literature that it would be a mistake to understand, by the Shilluk word for God, a being which could be defined in ethical terms. It is well, in discussing Shilluk ideas, to distinguish their ethical from their religious conceptions; for though Nyikang is the foundation of and sanction for Shilluk customary behaviour, and God is the support of Nyikang, in neither case is there any emphasis on intrinsic ethical qualities. Nyikang is not the teacher or founder of an ethical system, and the attributes which he shares with God refer, not to judgements of ethical value, but to the nature of reality and its interpretation. In the biographies of the Shilluk kings their traditional reputations are not mainly founded upon whether they were just or virtuous, but upon whether the Shilluk prospered under them, whether they were effective in war, whether they were brave, and whether they were clever. Their caprices are also remembered.

Nyikang and Dak were the most important Shilluk kings and may be regarded as models of what the ideal Shilluk king should be. Some account of their lives has already been given, but it has perhaps not been made clear that the stories recorded of them emphasize their intrigues, deceptions, and intelligence, and the craftiness which seems for the Shilluk to be a sign of the particular gifts of God. Thus, in the story of the attempt by Dimo to kill Dak, when Nyikang made the effigy which was speared in Dak's stead, it is said that[2] Dimo said 'Nyikang is a fool, but Dak is full of talk', which means, says Oyler, that Dak was a man of ideas. He also says that Nyikang 'was an inventor, and many of the things in everyday use . . . were first made by Nyikang'. In their contests with Dimo, Nyikang and Dak show themselves both more powerful and cleverer, and in this cleverness they are alike. Dak particularly, the son who effectively succeeds his father and is second in importance only to Nyikang himself, is shown to be not only

[1] Howell and Thomson, 1946, p. 8.

[2] Oyler, 1918 (i), p. 108. In this account, it is said that Dak made the effigy, though in other accounts, e.g. Westermann, 1912, p. 159, Nyikang made the effigy.

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a cow, for example. In a text given by Westermann[1] the hare is taught and saved by *juok*. The hare (or rabbit) is said by Hofmayr to be the favourite figure in many Shilluk animal stories, and the stories quoted by him and by Westermann show how clever, and how lucky, the hare is. A story given by Hofmayr[2] about the hare's eating young crocodiles appears in a different form in Westermann,[3] where this act is attributed to Dak, the clever son of Nyikang. The moral of these stories is that astuteness and trickery, like knowledge, pay, and it seems as though unusual intelligence, ingenuity, and luck associate those who possess them with the divine intelligence, and the success for which God is the Shilluk explanation. Hofmayr gives as a translation for the Shilluk expression *juoga tarr*, 'that which I have from the highest being, my soul, my lot, luck, my other self, is favourable to me'.[4] The large number of Shilluk riddles is an indication of the high value set on cleverness and ingenuity, and it is to be expected that these qualities, held up for admiration in their stories and in their daily life, should be ideally associated with Nyikang and their kings.

The kings, and all others inspired by *juok*, are sacred because they manifest divine energy and knowledge, and they do so by being strong, cunning, and successful, as well as by appearing to be in closer touch with the supra-human than are ordinary men. The signs of this closer communion are dreams and 'hysterical' possession, or at least some outward sign of contact with a superior power. Examples of behaviour showing this are numerous. In the installation ceremonies of 1943, when the king-elect was set on the sacred stool of Nyikang at a climax in the ceremony, we are told that 'the *reth* (king) was seized with a trembling fit at the critical moment, and certainly he appeared to be in a dazed condition immediately afterwards'.[5] This form of behaviour is a common sign of possession by a power greater than human among other Nilotic peoples. Though there was some reference in these ceremonies to the king as the source of justice, and to the ethical qualities necessary in a ruler, they were clearly distinct from the central religious significance of the ceremonies. So also, though we find many references in Shilluk texts to God as the helper of the poor and the final court of appeal in trouble, his activity in these respects is not to be taken as an indication that he is only or primarily an apotheosis of ethical virtue. Many of the hymns to Nyikang and God are laments that the land is being destroyed because they are not helping, and we are told that when their prayers are not answered, the Shilluk may curse Nyikang for not assisting them.[6] A Shilluk proverb says that 'God threads good and evil men on a single string', suggesting that, in some circumstances at least, God does not seem to reward virtue and punish vice.[7] In other texts he is shown as the ultimate sanction for customary ethical behaviour, as a helper, and as a

[1] 1912, p. 180.
[2] Op. cit., 155.
[3] Howell and Thomson, 1946, p. 62.
[4] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 376.
[5] 1925, p. 376.
[6] Op. cit., p. 193.
[7] Oyler, 1918 (ii), p. 285.

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theme of these ceremonies was the avoidance of Nyikang and a fear of his power, accompanied by the veiling of the objects particularly associated with him. The complexity of this behaviour, particularly the 'fear and laughter', demands a more penetrating analysis than is possible here.

Conclusion

In such a brief account it has been possible to give only an outline of the cosmological ideas and social values of the Shilluk, and it has been inevitable also that these should have been somewhat over-formalized and systematized. Shilluk cosmological ideas are embedded in belief and action. They are not systematized by the people themselves, who reveal them only by their sayings and their behaviour. It is impossible to give an account of them without abstracting them from the reality, formulating them as ideas with a certain degree of coherence between them, and thus constructing a system which has no exact counterpart in the thought of the Shilluk themselves. Such an account is bound to show, here and there, that effort to achieve consistency which is part of our tradition, but not of theirs. I have tried to show how the order known to the Shilluk is dependent upon their belief in a mythical hero and king, Nyikang, who is the figure to which every subsequent Shilluk king is assimilated in thought. This assimilation is enacted in the ritual for the installation of each new king. Nyikang is an analogue, for the Shilluk, of the power which created and maintains the universe. That power, which I have been content to call God, is of greater importance to the Shilluk as a source of vitality, both intellectual and physical, than as a being with ethical attributes. Nyikang and the kings similarly belong not to an ethical, but to a metaphysical system. Shilluk religion is concerned with the maintenance, as a divine order, of the order in which they live and have always lived. The kings, and Nyikang, are held to represent that order, which without them would not exist. The death of a king and the installation of his successor, are therefore of critical importance in the Shilluk kingdom, and that importance is marked by ceremonies of great imaginative and symbolic richness. The importance and uniqueness of the king is similarly emphasized by the existence of a special vocabulary used of him, and by various special observances which may be studied in the literature. They mark him off from ordinary men, no less than his titles—'first-born of God', 'child of God', 'reflection of the ancestors', 'master of the world', 'last-born of God', and others.[1] Any particular king, however, is also, as an individual human being, to some degree unequal to the office. The Shilluk have no superstitious reverence for the individual human king, and many kings have been removed by violent death when, for one reason or another, their people have tired of them. It is, perhaps, chiefly after the climax of the installation ceremonies that the dignity of the office, and the human nature

[1] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 150. The 'first-born' and the 'last-born' have special status, at least in Dinka thought, because the first 'opens the way' for the others, while the other 'closes the way'. They are, so to speak, the alpha and omega of generation.

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of its occupant, are most clearly recognized. Then the elected king, wearing on his wrists the emblematic silver bracelets and followed by a bearer carrying a fan made from the wings of the saddle-billed stork, comes down from the mound of the shrine at Aturwic; he is lifted on to the sacred stool of Nyikang, and receives the allegiance of the chiefs of settlements, who stick their spears into the ground before him. Though he sits in state as a king, he is admonished by the chiefs and told what is expected of him. At the election of 1943–4, the chief of Tonga said to the king; 'Our job is not to keep order, that is your job. Our duty is to supply you with choice morsels of hippo meat.'[1] Although he was speaking of a new, administrative situation, we may see here the idea of the king as a source of social order, who fulfils his function merely by existing. The king's office keeps the Shilluk in palpable relation with an ideal order, which they hold to be the true order of their universe. There is a Shilluk proverb which says that 'the Shilluk only believe what they see'.[2] In their human king they are also able to see what they believe.

[1] Howell and Thomson, 1946, p. 71.

[2] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 377.

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tant among the Nuer and Dinka, does not usually arise. The Shilluk seem to attach greater significance to physical paternity than do other Nilotes and the *okeijo* male will usually be linked to the name of his *genitor*, even though this carries with it no legal rights. In the case of males there is often a tendency on the part of the maternal uncle or his heirs to deny to the *okeijo* rights of inheritance or full participation in the reciprocal privileges of the lineage, so that his status is sometimes precarious and indeterminate.

Unlike the Nuer and Dinka, the Shilluk have no 'Ghost-Marriage'.[1] It is not stated as a fundamental obligation of kinship that a wife should be 'married to the name' of a dead kinsman, though the sentiment which dictates the custom among the Nuer and Dinka is not absent among the Shilluk. In this sense the Nuer and Dinka system is perhaps more individual than that of the Shilluk. Among the Shilluk continuity of the kinship group, not of the individual, is assured by normal legal marriage with cattle which might well have been used by the deceased for this purpose, but are not transferred in his name. Names are retained, however, by a belief in reincarnation. It is believed that the spirit of some ancestor appears in the new-born child which is then named after the ancestor. At the birth of every child a ceremony is performed, usually with the assistance of a *bag reth* who specializes in such matters, to determine this. The participants will ask, '*men akal yi min*?—'This one is brought by whom?' This accounts for the repetition of names in Shilluk genealogies, irrespective of sex, since there is no reason why the spirit of a female ancestor should not enter a male child or vice versa.

As will be seen later, a man who seduces a girl, if she subsequently gives birth to a child, cannot assume legal parenthood of his offspring except by marrying the mother and then only if at least some of the bridewealth cattle have been transferred, and the initial processes of marriage performed before the child is born. Theoretically, at least, children born out of wedlock cannot be legitimized and must therefore remain *okeijo*. This does not apply if the father is betrothed to the girl at the time, provided that he eventually completes the marriage payments. It often happens, however, that a child born in these circumstances is adopted by the man who subsequently marries the mother, and marriage in these conditions usually brings with it legal parenthood of children born out of wedlock.

Violation of Rights in Women

Seduction of Unmarried or Betrothed Girls and Adultery

The seduction of unmarried girls is accounted a serious wrong among the Shilluk and one which demands compensation. The wrong is referred to as *kwer kweb nian ajur* and compensation is assessed, both currently and traditionally, at one ox. Pumphrey remarks that,

> . . . an original seduction often eventuates in marriage, in which case the seduction payment is payable first and the marriage payment after (and over and above it). In such cases also marriage dates from the acceptance of the sheep and it is improbable that the girl's family will accept it until the seduction payment is completed.[2]

[1] See Evans-Pritchard: 'Some Aspects of Marriage and the Family among the Nuer', *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft*, 1938 and Rhodes-Livingstone Inst. 1948.

[2] Pumphrey: unpublished records.

9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

that the most definite contrasts may be found. Whether this established and institutionalized monarchy is the result of diffusion from elsewhere, a legacy from ancient Egypt,[1] or the result of spontaneous development from the politico-religious functionaries who exist in embryo form among other Shilluk-speaking[2] and, indeed, other Nilotic peoples, is a controversial subject which I do not propose to discuss here.

Territorially, Shilluk country is divided into two provinces, within which are the northern and southern provinces of Muomo and Tung, eleven divisions, and finally each division into a number of settlements which are referred to as *podh*.[3] The settlement is the largest political unit which has a permanent and stable function in Shilluk society today.[4] The members occupy a common and clearly defined territory, have a common grazing and fishing area held collectively, a common name, and a common system of age-set nomenclature.[5] Within each settlement are a number of villages or hamlets, each of which, with its offshoots, is occupied by a distinct kinship group, the local lineage of one of the main Shilluk clans. One of these lineages is usually dominant and, though it does not give its name to the settlement, its leader is generally recognized as holding some authority over the rest of the community. In each settlement there are also usually representative lineages of *kwareth* who sometimes, but not always, have assumed a position of dominance within that settlement, usually by force of numbers. There are also *bang reth* living in close association with *kwareth* or tending one or more of the numerous royal shrines.[6]

There are frequent movements and migrations, both of individuals and of small domestic groups. The persons who thus take up residence in other parts of the country retain links with kinsmen in their original home and these links continue for a period. The number of generations which pass before they are forgotten is indeterminate and variable, but the factor of territorial association is an important one. Lineages of one clan living in one area are likely to retain these links and remain bound by rules of exogamy however far removed they may be in the kinship structure. Moreover, common residence in one village area or even one settlement may create bonds which are equal in strength to kinship ties and may even carry with it a bar to intermarriage. In such circumstances there is usually the fiction of common descent through the female line. Among the Shilluk there is a bar to marriage with close relatives on the maternal side carried to three or four generations, but common residence sometimes creates a more permanent prohibition.

[1] See Seligman, C. G., *Egypt and Negro Africa*. George Routledge & Sons, 1934, p. 60.

[2] For example, the Anuak nobles; see Evans-Pritchard, *The Political System of the Anuak of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*. Monographs on Social Anthropology, London School of Economics. 1940; and Driberg, J. H., *The Lango*.

[3] *podh*. A more elastic and relative term than I had realised when writing an article on this subject in 1937. *podh* simply means 'home' or 'homeland' and Shilluk refer to *podh collo*: 'Shillukland'. The word itself has the same relativity as the Nuer word *ciang* and the Dinka word *wut*.

[4] There have, of course, been changes of boundaries and processes of fission and fusion characteristic of any segmentary society. The nature of the terrain in Shilluk country, however, precludes any great change. The limitations of high ground, with clear-cut watercourses as boundaries, together with associated economic interests, tend to stabilize communities.

[5] This is a significant fact and one which throws much light on the true nature of the Shilluk *podh*. When we compare other Nilotic tribes we find that age-set nomenclature is common to whole tribes, but does not extend beyond tribal boundaries (Nuer) or, like the Shilluk, is limited to smaller segments of society (Ngork Dinka).

[6] Lineages of the *kwareth* are referred to by the name of the *reth*, *nyireth* (son of a *reth*), or *nyinyireth* (grandson of a *reth*) who founded them. Thus *kwareth* Fadiet, *kwanyireth* Adung, &c. Similarly, *bang reth* are distinguished as *bang reth* Fadiet, *bang nyireth* Adung, &c.

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
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CHAPTER II.
SOCIAL STRUCTURE.

INTRODUCTION.

361 [101] [221] [883] Unlike their neighbours the Dinka and the Nuer the Shilluk have become entirely sedentary. They have a long river frontage in proportion to the population and there is therefore no necessity for an annual migration for summer grazing. In the summer the cattle are taken across to islands and the youths accompanying them build temporary cattle camps, but in no case is a village periodically entirely deserted.

[101] 614 631 Thus the Shilluk lack what for example the Dunjol Dinka living opposite them receive, namely an annual refresher course in clan organisation. The Dunjol Dinka village organisation disintegrates in the summer and the clans to a large extent reform for summer grazing. No such periodical reformation takes place with the Shilluk and consequently the clan organisation is more masked by the growth of territorial administrative units. Had the territorial unit, superimposed by years of the sedentary habit, obliterated completely the clan-organisation the administration of the tribe would be relatively simple. But Shilluk conservatism causes them to remain profoundly clan-conscious, and if to-day after some four hundred years of the sedentary state the tribe were for some reason to revert to nomadic habits there is no doubt that the clans would instantly reform.

621 182 721 The territorial system has evolved as the result of the grouping together of neighbouring hamlets, largely for purposes of defence against other groups, into what will be termed "settlements."

THE CLAN (KWAR).

614 *Kwar* (meaning literally "descendants"), followed by the name of the ancestor in question, is the Shilluk equivalent of clan. *Kwar* Okel designates all patrilineal descendants of Okel. Often the ancestor is mythical. There may be some hundred recognised clans in the tribe. But though every one knows to which clan he belongs, and although the clan entire continues to be an exogamous unit, it has ceased to possess for practical purposes any corporate unity. It

possesses no chief as such. The clans have in fact disintegrated over the face of the country, so that not only will clan "A" be distributed over several settlements, but one settlement will contain detachments of several clans. A detachment of clan within a settlement has been termed a "lineage" by Mr. Howell and will be so termed in this note.

THE SETTLEMENT (PODH).

The word *podh* is as elastic as the English "home" or the Arabic "dar." It can describe the entire Shilluk country, a settlement or a group of settlements. Properly however it designates the settlement, which is a group of villages, containing several lineages, agglomerated for purposes of mutual defence and owing allegiance to a common chief. The settlement is the basic element in the indigenous tribal structure.

The country is divided into some hundred settlements, varying in size from Kodok which contains more than 600 adult males to others containing less than 100. Geographically they are divided by lines approximately at right angles to the river.

Each settlement contains, in microcosm, the administrative difficulties of the tribe. For the settlement, which appears at first to be a purely territorial unit, is really a collection of different lineages. These lineages, welded together by threat of war, are apt to be dissident in the present time of comparative peace and although they owe allegiance to their common chief they sometimes feel and pay more to the lineage head within the settlement. There is, in fact, in the settlement, as in the whole tribe, a conflict between the loyalties due to the territorial unit and those due to the submerged but ever existing clan.

It is said that Nyikang originally granted each settlement to a clan. The descendants of the original grantees, if they survive, are considered the owners of the soil and are termed *dyil*, to distinguish them from subsequently immigrating lineages, described as *wedh*. Naturally the lineage of the original grantees is often extinct, in which case the next senior lineage in the settlement becomes *dyil*. In theory the *dyil*

The homesteads are arranged in roughly horse-shoe shape around an open space in which are tethered the sheep and cattle of the hamlet. Within this space is usually a very large hut (*luak*) used for animals in the rains and throughout the year as a guest-house and general village club. There is also usually a normal sized hut, with no surrounding fence, known as the *geu*, which is used as a dormitory by the unmarried men. In this hut are put the ashes of the cattle dung with which the young men cover themselves at night for warmth and protection from flies. Some villages have a tree in the central circle, but more often there is a complete and inhospitable absence of shade.

The homestead (*gol*) consists of two huts between which is an area enclosed by a fence of dura stalks or rough grass matting. The family group inhabiting the homestead is called also (presumably by transference) *gol*, and it is in this latter sense that the word *gol* will be used in this note.

In this sense *gol* is the smallest (though important) social unit in the tribe. An unmarried man does not own a homestead. All unmarried persons live in the homestead and adhere to the *gol* of their father. If their father is dead they adhere to the *gol* of their eldest married brother or, if they have none, to their deceased father's (married) brother. The owner of the homestead to which they adhere is the leader of their *gol*, and as such is responsible for the behaviour of its members. This vicarious responsibility on the part of the *gol* leader is a corollary to the principles of the ownership of cattle (and sheep). The cattle of the *gol* are owned and disposed of by the *gol* leader alone, and since the remedy for a wrong is a payment of cattle it follows that he and not the actual malefactor is held responsible. The position resembles that of the Roman family where the pater-familias alone is *sui juris*, all others being *alieni juris*. The Shilluk *filius familias*, however, becomes *sui-juris* on marriage which the Roman son did not. The vicarious responsibility of the *gol* leader has the convenient aspect that the *gol* leader is more easily found by the arm of the law than the actual malefactor because of the fact that he owns a homestead.

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
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177 422 436 [454 556] [684] [182 583] [146]

Recently, owing to the cultivation of cotton and to the increase in demand for work at Malakal and elsewhere, the value of money has come to be more appreciated. Most of the money so acquired is stored up for the purchase of a bull, very little being spent in shops. The purchaser of a bull not unreasonably objects to its going into the maw of the *gol* herd and accordingly deposits it for safe keeping with a distant friend. This innovation, which is no less than the introduction of a system of private ownership of cattle, is calculated to work eventually a deep change in customary law. The growth of cash-mindness has already resulted in cash being sometimes substituted for a bull in cases of payments in compensation for sexual wrongs. No case is known where cash has been accepted instead of one or more of the bride wealth cattle, but this would be logically the next step. The effect of a change to cash bride wealth would be large. The present system makes for tribal cohesion and for the administratively convenient system of vicarious responsibility, whereas cash marriage payments would loosen remaining cohesion of the *gol* and render each man responsible for himself. Cattle would cease to become a medium of exchange in marriage contracts and become a commodity. The innumerable goats would cease to eat up the cotton and the products of the Mission gardens and instead themselves be eaten, much to the benefit of the Shilluk physique according to medical opinion. The economic absurdity of the Malakal Hospital contractor being sometimes compelled to import tinned milk by air so as not to forfeit his deposit would be avoided. The possibility of such economic advantages is to be set against the consequent lessening of tribal cohesion.

Succession.

425 567

There are no definite rules for the inheritance of chattels. Distribution usually takes place before death. If not they will generally be taken by the eldest son, or, in default of sons, by the next-of-kin to the deceased. The inheritance of chattels rarely produces litigation.

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Cattle are taken by the succeeding *gol* leader, who may be a married son or a married brother according to circumstances. In any case the new *gol* leader holds the cattle inherited under the same trust as

that under which the deceased held them. For example if a man dies leaving four sons, two married and two unmarried, the two unmarried sons will join the *gol* of their eldest married brother, who thereupon becomes to them *in loco parentis* and their *gol* leader. With this addition to his *gol* the eldest married brother will take also the cattle which used to belong to the deceased, his father, but he will hold them "on trust" for the marriage of these two brothers.

THE MARRIAGE TIE.

Marriage marks the assumption of personal responsibility, signified outwardly by the acquisition of a homestead. A man wishes to marry as many wives as he can because, although a man with one wife is a full member of society, he who has three or four (more being unusual outside the *Kwar Reth*), is a man of substance and power. This is because his *gol* will become large and powerful and in a position to dominate in its locality. Where an appeal to the spear is an ever present possibility there is definite strength in numbers. There is no place in society for batchelors or spinsters of mature age, and in fact with the exception of *Reth's* daughters and the mentally deficient they hardly exist. Women outnumber men, so that polygyny is reasonable and almost necessary.

The marriage tie creates an obligation to pay cattle, but it is not created by or dependent upon such payment. To render a union a marriage only two things are essential. First there must be no positive barrier, (such as known consanguinity between the parties, whether through male or female lines of descent) and secondly there must be an offer and an acceptance. The offer and acceptance are symbolised by the man offering to the women's *gol* a sheep (*dyel dhoh*). Acceptance of this sheep signifies acceptance of the suitor. The marriage is then complete. There follows the beer brewing (*tieng mogho*) and a wedding dance which is held in the woman's village and which serves the important purpose of fixing the marriage in the minds of the public. The completion of the cattle payments (*kany*) may be delayed over a period of years, and until they are complete the woman usually continues to live in her own homestead where her husband may visit

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
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182 583 591 her. The inconvenience of this arrangement acts as a spur to the husband to complete the payments as quickly as possible in order to get his wife home to do the cooking.

585 848 Thus a marriage tie is complete as soon as the proffered sheep has been accepted, the cattle payments being in the nature of a concomitant transaction. Accordingly children born after the marriage tie is complete are legitimate, irrespective of a possible deficiency in cattle payments. The criterion of legitimacy, a question often in dispute, is not the sufficiency of the cattle payments but the acceptance or otherwise of the proffered sheep. Incidentally if the wedding dance is proved to have been held this is usually sufficient proof of the acceptance of the sheep, so that the question at issue is usually whether or not the wedding dance was held. Naturally evidence about this, which is a function attended by a large gathering, is usually forthcoming.

585 [684] It is not always so, however, particularly where the marriage under dispute occurred some twenty years previously. In such circumstances if it is proved as a fact that more than four head of cattle have been paid then, since four head of cattle is the maximum payable for seduction, a strong presumption is raised that the union was a true marriage. Analogously a contrary presumption is raised if it appears that not more than one or two head have been paid, a presumption which would be rebutted only by proof that a wedding dance has been held.

586 [848] A marriage in which only a few head of cattle are paid is often dissolved since the woman's *gol* are apt to get tired of waiting and to marry her to another man. In such case the children born of the dissolved marriage are legitimate irrespective of the smallness of the cattle payments and of the fact that the marriage was short-lived. This question will receive a more detailed consideration later.

CUSTOMS SURROUNDING MARRIAGE.

586 [578] Surrounding the elements necessary to the creation of the marriage tie is a mass of traditional procedure which serves to solemnise and make marriage as permanent as may be. Divorce entails a chain of acrimonious litigation not only wearisome to the litigants but likely to cause family disruption.

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585 A poor quality animal will be rejected by the *fal tong* of the bride's family who will request the best man to bring a better. In a sense these intermediaries act as solicitors of the contracting parties, and [182] by their mediation reduce friction which might lead to a breach of the marriage.

The *mogho thiek* is the final ceremony marking the separation of the wife from her own clan, and sometimes ends with a mock battle resulting in the "violent" removal of the bride by the kinsmen of the bridegroom. The bridegroom's party throw spears into the village of the bride and her relations reply with an answering shower, each side keeping the other's spears. After this mock battle the bride goes to [591] the village of the bridegroom. The remaining two or three head of cattle will soon be brought and the transaction is then complete. The last bull is sometimes known as *wanh thiek*.

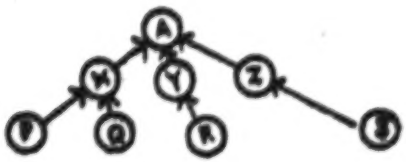
The above is a description of a marriage in which no hitch has occurred. Often the sequence of events is entirely different. For [836 example an original seduction often eventuates in a marriage, in which 684] case the seduction payment is payable first and the marriage payment after (and over and above) it. In such cases also the marriage dates from the acceptance of the sheep and it is improbable that the girls' family will accept it until the seduction payment is complete. Again some marriages drag on interminably because the bridegroom's *gol* does not produce cattle. In such cases the wife's *gol* sometimes tire [586] of waiting and end the marriage by marrying her to another, in which case the disappointed husband is entitled to recover any cattle he has paid. At other times, if the husband is acceptable to the woman's *gol* or if, as often happens, they know that the girl is so fond of her lover that all attempts to marry her elsewhere will fail they accept the marriage and content themselves by waiting until a daughter of the marriage is married, when they will claim from her bride wealth the number of cattle remaining in arrears from the bride wealth of her mother.

583 Generally the cattle payments go all to the *gol* leader of the woman, be he her father, brother, or uncle. Professor Seligmann was at pains to discover how the cattle were divided among the relatives of the wife, and especially what was the share of the maternal uncle. In fact

compulsory to comply. It will be seen later that it lessens the possibility of *dwalo*. 582 835 613 607

Dwalo[36]

In this diagram :—



X, Y and Z are, as before, *ora* of A (men of A having married women from them). X have married women from P and Q; Y have married women from R; and Z have married women from S. The entire membership of P, Q, R and S stands to *pac* A as *myer man ora*,[37] that is to say *myer ora* of the *myer ora* of A (or "villages of the wives of the *ora* of A," an exact translation of "*myer man ora* A"). To have sexual relations with a woman of a village which is thus *ora* of the second degree (*pa man ora*) is to break a taboo and incur the supernatural sanction of *dwalo* sickness.

The same sickness is said to be produced by incest or by a man having relations with a women to whom he is related; but it seems that the most grievous form is that incurred in the manner described. It will appear complicated but to the Shilluk it is a simple conception. Nothing is more important than to avoid friction with one's *pa ora* and nothing is better calculated to produce it than the seduction of a *pa man ora* girl. This may require explanation. As already said 182 582 607 613 835

36. *Dwalo* is a form of sickness which from a description of the symptoms would appear to resemble dropsy. Both the woman concerned and her child are affected, and it is believed that they will die unless the man who has seduced her in contravention of the taboo makes a prophylactic sacrifice by splitting a gourd, killing a sheep and putting the stomach contents on top of the gourd in the road-way, "so that the people passing-by may carry away the *dwalo*." 753 755

37. *Myer* is the plural of *pac*.

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there develops a tendency for *pac* A (to refer again to the diagram above) to marry women of *pac* X. Men of *pac* A will therefore have ready access to the unmarried girls of *pac* X, as, similarly, will men of *pac* X have ready access to the unmarried girls of their *pa ora*, P. Now if a man of *pac* A seduces a girl of *pac* P it naturally annoys the men of *pac* X who regard *pac* P girls as in some sense their prerogative.

Dwalo is thus a good example of a religious sanction harnessed to the service of social expediency. Without doubt, although no Shilluk volunteered the explanation, the *dwalo* taboo has developed from the consciousness that seduction must be rigorously discouraged where it would imperil good relations between *ora*.

DIVORCE.

The verb *tang* is used for the breaking of a marriage, whether owing to the death of the wife or to her refusal to live with her husband. Cases where the wife dies are naturally less acrimonious than those of the other kind and will be considered first.

Where a marriage is terminated by the death of the wife, her *gol* must either present to the husband an unmarried sister as *kai ot*,[38] or they must return the cattle (or their equivalent in similar animals) making deductions for children born of the marriage and living at the time of their mother's death. These deductions are generally at the rate of two head for each son and five for each daughter, the children of course going to their father. Thus a husband who has paid the full bride wealth of ten head and has a son and a daughter alive and born of the marriage can reclaim only three head of cattle.

Cases resulting from the refusal of the wife to cohabit with her husband may be more properly described as cases of divorce. Divorce in this sense results not from any act of the parties but from a state of affairs judicially recognised as warranting the return to the husband of the bride wealth, with or without suitable deductions for children born. Deductions are usually made, but if it is held that the behaviour of the wife has been particularly blame-worthy the husband is sometimes

38. Literally "substitute of the house."

THE SHILLUK SETTLEMENT.

By P. P. Howell.

The Shilluk word *Kwar* may be roughly translated as "clan" and refers to a group of persons who trace descent unilaterally and patrilineally to a common ancestor. They are bound by distinct rules of behaviour, by special and mutual observances and are exogamous. Literally the word *Kwar* means "descendants of" and often has no wider reference than the descendants of a relatively recent ancestor. The exact meaning may vary according to the context. The Shilluk tribe is divided into a number of traditionally recognised clans, the members of which consider themselves bound by ties of kinship, however remote, and although their feeling of corporate unity is much modified by the dissolution of territorial ties, they are still very vaguely clan conscious. In the distant past, in particular during the migration period, the clan was not associated with any particular tract of country, but the members moved from one place to another as a body and the intense feeling of mutual dependence was kept alive by proximity. Today the clan is widely scattered and there is no periodic reunion and the clan never meets or acts as an entity. Thus tradition alone remains and with it the observance of exogamy which does more to maintain those traditions than any other factor.

As among many primitive peoples, the process of lineal segmentation and migration within the clan has long been a phenomenon of Shilluk society. The original clans—if it be possible to speak of clans as such—are now represented by a number of off-shoots resident in widely separated parts of the country. These off-shoots will hereafter be referred to as "lineages." It is natural that the members of one lineage are more closely bound to each other for they are not only more closely akin, but also in daily communication with each other. Nevertheless, the links which bind together the lineages of one whole clan are not yet wholly severed and after many generations of disintegration, the members still trace descent to a common ancestor.

[p. 47]

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The Shilluk, although he is conscious of his relationship to his widely scattered kinsmen, normally thinks in terms of his localised lineage. Thus in using the word *Kwar* he often refers to some comparatively recent ancestor, probably to the Shilluk who originally migrated to his settlement and founded his particular lineage. The emphasis here is upon the circumstances in which he is questioned. Away from his settlement and speaking in tribal terms he will refer to the ancestor common to all his kinsmen, in more detailed family discussions to the founder of his lineage.

Every Shilluk is thus a member of a large and scattered kinship group. He is also a member of a local lineage and is bound to it by vigorous feelings of unity fostered by proximity and common interests. In contrast he is also the inhabitant of a settlement (*Podh*) and common residence within it implies something more than a neighbourly spirit. Its occupants are not a mere collection of independent lineages, for they are united by social, economic and political obligations, by the need for mutual protection and have recognised rules of behaviour to one another.

The Shilluk are now a sedentary tribe, though they were originally nomads, and it has been said that their apparent political and social cohesion in contrast to many related peoples, has been partly due to the greater facility of communication. In fact their history has been one of frequent internal strife and dynastic quarrels, but it is true to say that in the rainy season, when normal communications are made difficult by the rising of the river level, they have always had an unrestricted medium of travel on the Nile itself and settlements are conveniently situated near to its banks. Shilluk villages are built in an almost continuous line along the west bank with a few scattered settlements on the east bank and on the lower reaches of the Sobat. This formation, however, means that they are dispersed over a very long area, and from Fashoda in the centre, it is a considerable journey to Tonga or Muomo. Taking Shilluk country as a long narrow strip, without including the inland pastures or hunting grounds, the density of population is undoubtedly far greater than among most Nilotic tribes in the Sudan, but the length of country between the centre and

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the more distant settlements, owing to the length of the populated area, is not very much shorter. Most parts of Shilluk country are accessible to the inhabitants even when the water-courses and swamps are full, but travelling is not easy and social contact consequently less frequent in the rainy season. The result of such periodic inconvenience of communication and the length of inhabited country are twofold. In the first place, in the past at anyrate, the immediate power of the central authority the *Reth*, was slightly diminished and he was more dependent on the loyalty and competence of the settlement chiefs. Second, difficulty of communication increases the isolation of the settlement and intensifies the feeling of unity within it. Moreover, the clan, having no territorial basis, is put to a further disadvantage. The settlement thus gains importance socially, economically and politically in the structure of the tribe.

The formation of the settlement is based on a particular association of lineages and its structure can only be understood after a searching examination of their position. The fission of clan segments, individual enterprise and migration has been frequent for a very long period of Shilluk history. In each settlement there are therefore both indigenous elements and newcomers. Mr. Pumphrey has explained in outline the position and significance of the *Dyil*.[1] They are fundamentally associated with the land they occupy, and theoretically they enjoy great prestige and authority. Among most primitive peoples the fixation of sentiment on land is bound up with human interests and those who are more closely bound to it acquire special functions and prerogatives not accorded to newcomers. Besides their ritual association with the land, the *Dyil* have obligations and observances of primary importance in the social machinery of their settlement and they form the centre round which internal political activities revolve. Subsequent accretions known in Shilluk as *Wedh* normally hold a position of political subservience to the *Dyil*. It must be emphasised here, that this implies no social inferiority; it merely means that the *Dyil* are expected to take the lead in matters of importance to all inhabitants of the settlement. The *Jago* is usually the chosen representative of the *Dyil* lineage and holds the *Law Dwong* of office Mr. Pumphrey has pointed out that

[1] Dyil are the descendants of the people who originally received grants of land from Nyikang. - Analyst]

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554 613 621 this is not always true in practice, for the *Dyil* authority is frequently usurped by a later but more numerous element, sometimes by a lineage of the *Kwar Reth*. Even when this has occurred, the *Dyil* retain some of their rights and their especial relation to the land is not forgotten. They appear to have prior right to speak at a meeting of the local court; "let the *Dyil* speak" is a common saying at a legal discussion. However, newcomers who have taken over the position of authority seek to establish a ritual and traditional background for the power and prestige they have acquired and it is a tendency among the Shilluk for these newcomers to claim and assume the title of *Dyil* even if they are not. For example, in the settlement of *Yom Dhok-Alal* which is described in more detail below, the *Kwar Nyimol* have assumed the *Lau Dwong* though they have no traditional right to it, and they claim rather unconvincingly that they are the *Dyil*. Actually there are many lineages who have been in occupation of the settlement for a much longer period. *Kwar Oring* is said to be the oldest and is now represented by a single old man who is blind and near the end of his life. He lives with his married daughter at *Adod*, the smallest and most insignificant of hamlets. Even *Kwar Oring* is not descended from the original and autochthonous element, for there were older lineages who have died out or migrated in a body to other parts of the country. This will be the fate of *Kwar Oring* after the death of the sole representative. Although recognised as the oldest resident lineage in *Yom Dhok Alal*, there is no evidence that they ever held both the title of *Dyil* and authority over the other lineages.

The dominant lineage which gains undisputed authority through long association with the territory, or acquires the position through numerical superiority, is thus collectively the nucleus of the settlement round which other lineages group themselves. The *Jago*, their chosen leader, is the most important, though not necessarily the eldest, representative of that lineage and he is also the chief of the settlement. He is indeed in the nature of a common bond between the inhabitants, for through him social and political equilibrium is maintained. It follows that the occupants of a settlement are bound together, not only by proximity and common interests, but by an attitude of obedience to the

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chief and by their special relations with the lineage which holds authority over them. Thus there are social, political and economic influences backed by common residence which promote unity and emotional security, and patterns of behaviour arise entirely distinct from those which characterise the kinship group.

The balance of loyalty to settlement or to kin is difficult to define. The lineage resident in one locality is clearly the most significant unit of society. Blood relationship is closer and co-operation is intensified by daily contact and mutual interests. All the factors which make for peace and mutual help in the settlement are not sufficient to break the ties which unite the local lineage. Loyalty, obligations and observances are greater towards a blood relative who is also a neighbour than towards an individual who is a neighbour only. The corporate unity of the lineage is kept alive by kinship which is a biological fact and the observance of exogamy and all the complicated obligations raised in marriage do not allow the Shilluk to forget. The extended clan, however, in which relationship may be so remote as to be fictitious, is not cemented together by lasting and mutual interests, nor are old associations renewed by periodic reunion. Even so, the traditions of the clan are to some extent maintained and the rule of exogamy is not broken however scattered its members

The Shilluk settlement consists of a number of hamlets *Myer*, (*Pl of Pac*,) each occupied by a lineage. The settlement has a varying number of distinct lineages resident therein, but each hamlet is exclusively occupied by a kinship group. Each hamlet is a separate cluster of huts which are built along the high ground parallel to the river bank. The distance between each varies from a hundred yards to a mile or so. The hamlet is not constant in the number of its huts and grows or diminishes in size according to the increase or decrease in numbers of the lineage which occupies it. Mr. Pumphrey has explained that off-shoots from hamlets are continually being initiated by enterprising young Shilluk who, having married, wish to build a home for themselves away from the parent hamlet. Sometimes these off-shoots (*Nyole Myer*) are started in other parts of the country, more usually within the settlement and not far from the birth-place fo their founder.

18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

THE AGE-SET SYSTEM.

561 The age-grade[5] organisation is a system of compulsory associations based on classifications of age and sex. In structure it is usually tribal, in outlook and political function essentially democratic. Among the [621] Shilluk, however, age-sets are recruited within the local group or settlement and have no connection beyond similarity of form and function, with age-sets recruited in other settlements. As will be seen, the role which the organization plays in tribal and settlement life is very limited, and is confined to specific military purposes.

It has been stated by some authorities that the age-set system is entirely lacking among the Shilluk or that it has broken down beyond recognition.[6] This would not be surprising, for the organisation of a 182 group into parallel associations based on age and sex, for political 561 purposes at any rate, is almost incompatible with an autocratic political 693 system. It must be remembered that although the concept of monarchy [170] among the Shilluk has not reached the same level as in the Lakustrine Bantu kingdoms or certain other Bantu tribes, it is more developed 182 than among most kindred Nilotics. The age-set system necessarily cuts 561 across the bonds of consanguinity, and, without severe modifications of 614

5. See distinction between "age-set" and "age-grade" as followed by Prof. Radcliffe-Brown and quoted by E. E. Evans-Pritchard in *The Nuer: Age-sets*—Sudan Notes and Records Vol. xix pp. 233-234. Doctor Evans-Pritchard also refers to "Age-set" system rather than "Age-grade" system and since this is a more accurate description his terminology is followed below.

6. Hofmayer (Wilhelm Hofmayer "*Die Shilluk. Geschichte, Religion und Leben Ein Nilotен-stammes.*" 1925) does not mention age-grades specifically, but with reference to initiation and warfare he mentions the existence of such an organization.

> "Every man is a soldier and literally always under arms. Every Shilluk who has ceremonially danced is a warrior as long as he is able to bear arms. They form groups. Every settlement is independent with its own *Bany* (principle singer and president). Different settlements combine and sally forth under the leadership of the eldest *Bany* against their powerful enemies. The *Bany* has only advisory powers and is chosen by the chiefs of the district. Unmarried youths form what corresponds to our permanent army, which is divided according to age and has many names."

18:Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

social and political function, cannot exist in a society where authority is held by virtue of blood. Further it is likely to raise ties and mutual obligations which conflict with those patterns of behaviour which unite the members of a clan. Usually, when the age-set system is highly developed, the clan system is weakened. The reverse may also be true, and since the kinship groups within the Shilluk settlement retain their distinction, the age-set system is of no great social significance. This is particularly so with regard to political matters. The *Jágo*[7] and the elders of the *Dyil* clan and a limited number of representatives from the less powerful lineages hold political authority in the settlement, and over them is the theoretical omnipotence of the *Reth*.

The group solidarity of the settlement springs from the power and prerogative of the *Dyil* clan and from common interests and territorial proximity. The compulsory association and stratification of all male members of the settlement emphasises that feeling of solidarity, but does not conflict with the political function of the *Dyil* clan, for its purpose is limited to warfare. In inter-lineage disputes within the boundaries of the settlement the organization does not function, but in warfare on a wider scale when the separate lineages must fight as one, the young men and warriors are mobilized into age-sets.

Every male inhabitant of a settlement, on reaching the age of puberty, is automatically grouped with his coaevals and together they are recruited to the most recently formed age-set. Each age-set, known in Shilluk as *Ric*, is made up of a series of sub-divisions which are grouped together temporarily until a new reorganization is made. There are two grades through which the members of an age-set will pass before retiring from active military service. Recruitment is compulsory and never individual.

The general structure of the organization is best explained diagrammatically.

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7. Chief.

Leadership in war however, is, dependent upon the collective vote of the age-sets, and this perhaps provides a clue to the origin and former purpose of the settlement; namely the necessity of alliance under the threat of war. The local kinship group, split off from the main branch of the clan is not a sufficiently powerful body to defend itself against attack. So lineages, resident in the same part of the country, join together and possibly link themselves to some numerically superior group. Mutual protection is thus made possible. The strongest lineage of the group later assumes political authority and a chief is chosen from its members, but for the purpose which the alliance was originally made, the warriors range themselves in ranks where kinship counts for nothing. A war-leader is elected and not necessarily from the dominant lineage. This is not, of course, the origin of the age-set system, but it may account for the form it has taken among the Shilluk.[9] Latterly, when large-scale warfare is comparatively rare, the original purpose of the alliance is disappearing and with it the motive for the age-set system. A period of proximity, common political and economic interests, however, have caused the separate lineages to regard themselves united by social ties and patterns of behaviour more lasting than those raised by a temporary alliance. The settlement thus becomes an integral unit of the social body.

9. The larger territorial divisions of the tribe, the *Luak*, which are described in Mr. Pumphrey's article, originated in the same way as the settlements. The inhabitants of each division made a temporary pact when a common cause arose. It is therefore likely that age-sets in the past covered a larger section of the population than they do to-day when each age-set is confined to the inhabitants of one settlement. The Shilluk are reticent when questioned on the subject and further investigation is necessary before a full account of the age-set system among the Shilluk can be recorded.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
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643 this emotional tension and political excitement have been in the past.

5. Although many of the Shilluk treated the ceremonies light-[781] heartedly and on occasions with much laughter, deep in their hearts was a profound respect for their own religious beliefs and a feeling of awe at the presence of Nyikang.

6. Despite the stormy path of recent Shilluk history in which *reths* were assassinated, hanged and exiled by an alien [178] government, and despite the disintegrating influences of civilization, the continuity of tradition and the pious attempt to follow it was remarkable.[7]

●182 643 648 7. The songs and ceremonies were characterized by a marked anti-Dervish attitude which dates back to the persecution of the Shilluk and their rulers by the followers of the Mahdi. The facts show that these attacks increased rather than weakened the unity of the tribe and indeed, strengthened the institution of the *reth* as the symbol of tribal cohesion in the face of opposition.

104 It is sometimes difficult to translate Shilluk terms accurately and concisely into English. Original Shilluk terminology is therefore used extensively in the text. The following Shilluk terms are consistently employed:—

Reth: The "king" of the Shilluk.

Nyireth: A son (or daughter) of a *reth*.

Kwa: Literally "descendants of", refers to a clan and precedes the name of the clan. Thus *Kwa Okelo* "the descendants of Okelo", *Kwa Reth* "the descendants of the *Reth*."

Nyikang and Dak: Tribal heroes of the Shilluk. The first king of the Shilluk and his son.

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7. Cf. P. Munro. "Installation of the Reth of the Chol." *S.N.R.* Vol. 1. pp. 145 ff. (and reproduced in full in C. G. Seligman. *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*. Appendix I.)

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
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(P.P.H.)

The funeral dance of the late *reth* was held in his private village on 7th, 8th, 9th of November, 46 days after his death. The dance is known as *wowo* in Shilluk, and is different from that held for other members of the tribe, which is called *ywok*.

All arrangements are in the hands of the *kwareth*, and Colo chiefs have no say in the matter at all. At the outset there was considerable argument among the *kwareth* over the form of the dance and the length of time it should last. The new *reth* and the family of Fafiti took one side and some of the *kwareth* chiefs the other. This argument affords an interesting example of how the form of Shilluk tradition becomes blurred from lack of use and the attention which is paid to past precedents. It is worth noting in this context that the dance held in 1913 for *reth* Fadiet lasted for two days only in his private village (*i.e.* the village where he had lived before he succeeded to the throne), and that he had held no dance at all for his predecessor *reth* Kur, no doubt owing to the circumstances attending the end of Kur's reign. This neglect on the part of Fadiet so angered his successor Fafiti, that he hurled the royal drums into the Nile, refusing to beat them for Fadiet, who had not fulfilled his traditional obligations to Kur, and held the dance with Fadiet's own drums. Therefore the dance of Fafiti had to be held with his own drums, for the traditional royal drums no longer exist (Note 5). The *reth* and Fafiti's family maintained that the proper period for a royal funeral dance was four days in the private village of the late *reth*. Other *kwareth* said that it should be two days only in the village of the late *reth* followed by an optional dance in Fashoda lasting four days at the discretion of the *reth*-elect. It should be noted, however, that this claim goes back to events several generations ago, for no dance was held at Fashoda either for Kur or Fadiet and probably not for their predecessors, who died unnatural deaths during the Turkish administration and the Mahdia. The new *reth* declared his intention of holding a dance of four days at Fashoda after the ceremonies at Pareth Fafiti, but at the last minute the counsel of the *kwareth* must have prevailed, for the

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182 dance at Pareth Fafiti lasted three days only, and no dance was held
766 at Fashoda at all.

[614] The duties of organizing the dance and of beating the drums fall
766 to a clan called Kwanyikir, the majority of whom live in the vicinity of Kodok. They are responsible for discipline among the dancers, and in particular for keeping unauthorized persons out of the sacred spots. About two hundred and fifty bulls were slaughtered for the occasion, fifty of which were provided by the family of Fafiti and the rest by well-wishers, who included a number of Arab merchants. The distribution of meat was arranged by Kwanyireth Kir, chief of Fadiang, who is chief of all the *kwareth*. As he is senile, blind and deaf, he was assisted by Kwanyireth Bol, chief of Lul and government court chief of the Fashoda division for the portion of Gol Nyikang.

643 The new *reth* has no special functions to perform, and it was notice-
776 able how careful he was to keep himself in the background. He never appeared in public while the dances were in progress, and though he attended on all three days he always went straight to his hut on arrival, and remained there during the day, and until he was ready to return [644] to Fashoda. It was obvious that the proceedings concerned the late *reth* alone, and it was his son Byawelo Fafiti who acted as host.

631 We had hoped that the form in which the contingents of dancers
766 came in would throw some light on the traditional grouping of Shilluk sections and former political organization. We had been told by the *reth* that all sections in the three divisions of Fashoda, Golbainy, and Detwok would be represented, and no one else. In fact a contingent also came from the Athodwoi division from north of Detwok. As far as could be seen the size of the contingents corresponded with the poll tax lists, and from those contingents who did come, very few warriors could have been missing. In the confusion of the dance it was not easy to see how the sections grouped themselves, but we got the impression that the Golbainy division split up into what, in government terminology are called "sections," but which tribally are more like the other divisions which participated. For example the sections

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does not count. It has been suggested that the prohibition of grass fires may spring from this prohibition upon building; it is necessary, if the building season is to start late, to preserve the grass for roofing. Out of respect for Nyikang it is also forbidden for the Shilluk to indulge in inter-sectional fighting, or possibly from fear of his wrath.

Several other prohibitions govern the *reth's* own behaviour: he may not sit upon the ambatch mattress, favoured by the Shilluk, until his installation, and his movements are considerably restricted. There is great importance attached to watercourses by the Shilluk, and until his installation the *reth* found himself unable to cross west of the big *khor* beside Fanyikang, which joins the Nile just downstream of the shrine of Nyikang.

To the north of Fashoda, he was "afraid of going too close to Nyikang". In fact he found any suggestion that he should travel north of Mal near Detwok uncomfortable. The importance attaching to *khors* is not confined to the two at Fanyikang and Mal. Whenever the new *reth* comes to a *khor*, before crossing it, he must step over a sheep, held prostrate in the bed, before he can cross. This sheep must be brought from the nearest village, but if a death has recently occurred in the village, or no one can be found to lend a sheep a sheaf of grass will do instead.

PART III—THE INSTALLATION OF ANEI KUR.

There are various preliminaries to the installation of the *reth* by Nyikang. Many materials necessary for the ceremonies have to be collected, and apparatus has to be made.

The most important is the expedition to *pothe manyo* (or raiding country), and northwards to the country traditionally conquered, though more probably merely raided, by Dak, the son of Nyikang. Two small sections are responsible for this embassy. The subsection of Akwobai in Kwom (Gol Nyikang), and the small section of Abwor in Mwomo (Gol Dhiang), are responsible for obtaining silver and cloth from the north, and as they go north they solicit gifts from Shilluk villages by the way.

24: Howell E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

THE ELECTION AND INSTALLATION OF RETH KUR WAD FAFITI OF THE SHILLUK

By P. P. Howell

With an account of the final ceremonies by J. O. Udal

IN a previous article[1] I described the death and burial of *reth* Dak *wad* Fadiet who was installed at Fashoda in January, 1946 and died in Malakal in May 1951. I explained that the events and ceremonies which took place would be treated separately, but that the death of one *reth* and the installation of his successor is all one process in which the soul of Nyikang, the founder of the Shilluk dynasty, passes from the old to the new. The period of the interregnum is full of dangers for the Shilluk people: *piny bugon*, "there is no land," the Shilluk say. The prosperity of the people is dependent on the position in society of the *reth*: he is the symbol of unity and national order and is further responsible for the control of natural phenomena for the benefit of his subjects. Such divine attributes are not automatically acquired by the newly appointed *reth*: he can only acquire them by careful observance of all the rites and ceremonies necessary to assure the transfer and to confirm him in his position. Each stage in these ceremonies is therefore another crisis passed both for the *reth* himself and for his people. It is a further step towards the re-establishment of former stability and only when he has been finally installed at Fashoda is there a return to normal. This state of affairs is manifest at every point of the proceedings which throughout so vividly display these concepts.

The events may be divided as follows:

(i) The death and "lying in state" of the late *reth* during the period, often several months, when his body lies in a hut in a village specially prepared for the purpose.

(ii) The election of his successor.

(iii) The actual burial of the late *reth's* remains in the village of his birth or adoption and the final mourning ceremonies called in Shilluk *wowo*.

(iv) The ceremonies which culminate in the actual installation of the new *reth* in the Shilluk capital of Fashoda.

These events have been described in some detail in the case of Fafiti *wad* Yor who was installed in 1917 and died in 1943, in the case of Anei *wad* Kur who succeeded him and who died in 1945 and of Dak *wad* Fadiet who succeeded Anei and died in 1951.[2]

[1] *The death and burial of Dak wad Fadiet*, S.N.R. Vol. 33 Part 1.

[2] Munro, P., *Installation of the Reth of the Col.*, S.N.R. Vol. 1. 1918. Howell, P. P. & Thomson, W. P. G., *The death of a Shilluk Reth and the installation of his successor*, S.N.R. Vol. 27. 1946, and Thomson, W. P. G., *Notes on the death of a Reth of the Shilluk*, S.N.R. Vol. 29. 1948.